

ELDRIDGE PLAYS

for
GIRLS
and
WOMEN



Bob's Dorothy

A One-Act Play of Modern Life

By

GRACE V. KINYON



Price 25 Cents

ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE *Inc.*
FRANKLIN OHIO & DENVER COLO.

The
HOUSE THAT
HELPS

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Eldridge Entertainment House

INCORPORATED

"The House That Helps"

Franklin, Ohio

also

Denver, Colo.

[30]

Bob's Dorothy

A ONE-ACT PLAY OF MODERN LIFE

By

GRACE V. KINYON



PRICE, 25 CENTS

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ELDRIDGE ENTERTAINMENT HOUSE, Inc.

FRANKLIN, OHIO also DENVER, COLO.

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ANNE GORDON:

The Mother, 44; looks old; carelessly dressed.

HELEN GORDON:

The Daughter, aspiring to be an actress.

KATE ROYCE:

Anne's friend, who looks like a flapper.

MOLLY AMES:

Another friend, languid and beautiful.

DOROTHY RICHMAN:

A wholesome American girl about twenty.

NORAH:

The maid, recently from Ireland.

PLACE: Any American city.

TIME: The present.

TIME OF PLAYING: About 30 minutes.

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Bob's Dorothy

SCENE: *The living room in the Gordon home. The curtain rises upon Helen standing before a long mirror, adjusting her hat and coat while Mrs. Gordon [Anne] is busy straightening the room.*

HELEN: Mother, I am desperately sorry I have to be away from home this morning when there's so much to do.

ANNE: Never mind, darling, it's your big chance, you know.

HELEN: But today of all days! Here we've been planning for Bob and that brand new girl of his for a week, and now the very day they're coming, I've got to be away.

ANNE: They probably won't be here until dinner time this evening and perhaps not then—for you remember the telegram said they might be delayed until tomorrow.

HELEN: Oh, but isn't it exciting, and how! I'm all steamed up about that girl. Just think of it, mother, a millionaire's daughter in our family. [*Struts around the room in make-believe pride.*] Guess we'll give this town something to talk about!

ANNE [*laughing*]: Hush, child, you're too absurd! But, seriously, it's a bit hard to realize that our Bob is going to be married—so unexpected, too. In the three months since he went out to that Colorado mine, he never wrote one serious word about a girl. Why, we never even knew there was a girl within miles of the place. Now, all of a sudden, he's engaged, and to the owner's daughter, too. But I do wish he'd told us more about her, because if she's one of those modern society girls, I'm afraid she'll find it hard to fit into our informal family.

HELEN: Very likely [*with a shrug*]; even I'm considered a bit old-fashioned myself, especially for the stage. But say, mother [*hesitatingly*], don't you think we ought to doll up a little to meet this new sister and her rich dad?

ANNE: Doll up? What do you mean? I'm working just as fast as I can to get the house ready, and Norah's planning for a good dinner tonight.

HELEN: Only that—because they're so terribly rich, they're probably used to a great deal of formality. [*Hesitatingly.*] Maybe you ought to go down today and get a hair dress and a manicure, and then wear some good-looking clothes while they're here. Just make yourself smart.

ANNE [*stopping her work in surprise*]: Smart? Me?

HELEN [*crossing to Anne and throwing an arm about her*]: Now, mother, darling, don't think I'm criticizing, for you're the sweetest mother in the world, and I love——.

ANNE: Yes, yes, but what do you mean? Out with it!

HELEN [*slowly*]: Nothing much—only—I just thought this girl and her father are used to so much style.

ANNE: And you want *me* to be stylish? How impossible! [*Laughing, but also a little distressed.*] Well, I'll try. I'll make an appointment at the beauty parlor right now, and by night you'll never recognize me. [*Turns away quickly to hide hurt look on her face.*]

HELEN: Oh, mother, you always understand.

ANNE: Now run along, you know you mustn't be late for your radio try-out.

HELEN: Mercy! I mustn't, for a fact; but, oh, dear, I'm scared stiff! Do you think I'll make it?

ANNE [*turning again to Helen*]: Of course! Radio isn't anything to be afraid of these days, and the fact that you are taking a part with professionals in that radio drama is wonderful advertising. It may even lead to a permanent part with the Garrick Players for all winter.

HELEN: You old dear, you'd put backbone into a sponge, you would, for a fact. Well, I'm off. Wish me luck. [*Blows a kiss to mother and exits right.*]

ANNE [*gazing after her*]: She's pretty young to meet the world, but she's been well trained and, after all, our children must develop their own talents. All we can do is to train them and trust them. [*Sighs as she goes about, putting the room in order.*]

HELEN [*coming back hastily*]: Mother, will you see that those dresses left on the bed in my room are sent to the cleaners today? I forgot to do it.

ANNE: Of course. [*Helen goes out, but again comes in.*]

HELEN: And, mother——.

ANNE: Yes, dear——.

HELEN: There's a little tear in the lace of that formal gown I have to wear tonight. Could you find time to fix it?

ANNE: Certainly, but hurry, or you'll be late. [*Helen again leaves, but sticks head through door.*]

HELEN: Don't forget about the beauty parlor. [*Exits right.*]

ANNE [*dropping dust-cloth and slowly walking to the mirror, where she surveys herself critically*]: Why, I'm old! And I never realized it. My hair's getting quite gray, and I'm only forty-four. Oh, I'll have to have it dyed or something, for I *can't* be an old woman. [*Almost in a panic.*] Even Helen doesn't want *that*! [*Looks at self again.*] My figure isn't all it should be, either. I must hold myself to that diet more rigidly,

but it's so hard when all the family has to have other kinds of foods, and how I do need a manicure! [*Examines nails.*] But then, housework and polished nails never do go together, and when one keeps a home going, there's so little time for one's self. Still, Helen is *right*—bless her heart—I know she didn't mean to hurt me, though it did, most awfully. I must get fixed before Bob and those strangers get here tonight. I'll call and make the appointment at once. [*Goes to phone, looks up her number and is about to call it when* *Norah, the buxom Irish maid-of-all-work, dressed in a house dress and somewhat soiled apron, enters from left.*]

NORAH: Faith, Misses Gordon, and I'll be after laving ye this mornin'.

ANNE [*hanging up receiver and rising*]: Leaving us? I don't understand?

NORAH [*coming to center—arms akimbo*]: Sure, me little Rosie just come to tell me that me cousin, Patrick Casey's wife, Annie, she that was Annie Rooney—ye know, ma'am, they lived nare us in Cork—was found dead in her bed this marnin', poor soul! How she did love to ate——.

ANNE [*impatiently*]: Yes, but *how* does that affect you, Norah? I'm sorry about your cousin's wife, but *our* work has to go on just the same, and you know there'll be company for dinner tonight.

NORAH [*in surprise*]: But, darlin', me cousin Pat has sint for me. He'll be that discouraged, poor man. [*Throws up hands.*] He's buried three wives before this, and now Annie is stricken down. [*Solemnly.*] The Lard sure dales heavy with some folks, don't he, now ma'am!

ANNE: It's too bad, Norah, but you know we're expecting Mr. Bob to be home tonight, bringing company with him, and I can't let you go. If you *must*, take a few hours off now, but be back in time to get dinner.

NORAH: Sure—I can't disappoint me own cousin on me mither's side. Pat, he was a *grand* husband f'r Annie, ma'am. Every day, while Annie went out washing, he always minded the kids just as good-like, and when he was drunk, he niver bate her up like most men do.

ANNE [*in despair*]: But what will I do if you leave me like this?

NORAH [*happily*]: Oh, ye can manage somehow, dearie. Now, I must be lavin', for Pat needs me before he gits too dhrunk. Poor Annie! God rest her soul! [*Clasping hands and rolling eyes upward.*] It's a lovely corpse she'll make, to be sure. I hope I kin help lay her out, though how they'll get a coffin for her who weighed three hundred pounds, the Lard only knows!

ANNE [*emphatically*]: In the meantime, what's to become of us?

NORAH [*cheerfully*]: Never mind, dearie, faith, ye'll get along somehow. Now, I'll be goin'. What an illigant wake they'll be havin'! [*Clasps hands in glee and exits left.*]

ANNE [*sinking back into her chair*]: Talk about irresponsibility! There it goes in person [*points after Norah*], and there also goes my chance at the beauty parlor, too. It looks like me to the kitchen for the rest of the day. [*Rises to follow Norah, when the doorbell rings. Gives hasty glance at self in mirror, takes off apron, arranges hair, then goes to door, right. Enter Molly Ames and Kate Royce, two middle-aged, but very young-looking women, exquisitely gowned and groomed.*]

ANNE: Molly, Kate, how good to see you! What brings you out so early in the day? Come in, sit down and take off your coats. [*Greets each and offers chairs.*]

KATE [*very brisk and efficient*]: No, Anne dear, we've just run in for a moment, so we'll keep our coats

on. [*They sit down with Anne beside them.*] We've come to make you promise to help with the benefit bridge we're giving at the Women's Club next week.

MOLLY [*languidly*]: The proceeds go to the hospital fund, and as you're a doctor's wife, you ought to show some interest.

ANNE: You know I'm interested, but I never seem to find much time for card parties.

KATE: You'll never begin younger. [*Flippantly.*]

ANNE: It's a bad day to ask me for anything, girls, for Norah just now announced that she was going home for a while—and besides that, I'm having company for dinner.

MOLLY [*drawing off her gloves and displaying, with great satisfaction, her beautifully manicured hands*]: All I can say, Anne, is that if you want to stay young, you'd better take more time for these social stunts.

ANNE: Very true, Molly, but don't forget that I have a large and strenuous family, while you are absolutely free.

MOLLY: Thank heaven for that!

KATE: Don't mind her, Anne, just say you'll help with the bridge party.

ANNE [*looking troubled*]: I'd like to if——.

KATE: You see, we need your name on our list of patronesses, for, after all, you *have* a great influence in the town.

ANNE: Since you insist, I'll try to manage it. [*Noises and confusion heard at left.*] Excuse me a moment, I'll have to find out what's doing out there. [*Exits left.*]

MOLLY [*using compact and lipstick*]: Isn't it a crime for any woman to let herself go as Anne has? She's pathetically dowdy. [*Rises and goes to primp at mirror.*]

KATE: It's a fact, and when I think what a beautiful girl she was, it makes me just *sick*.

MOLLY: Well, Kate, why don't you take Anne in hand, about her looks, I mean. [*Sits herself again.*]

KATE: Do I dare?

MOLLY: Dare, why not?

KATE [*slowly*]: Well, in a way, she's a very prominent woman in the city. You—and I [*shrugging her shoulders*] have scarcely the social position she has. Both she and the Doctor represent the best element of the town.

MOLLY: But, at least, she ought to modernize herself. Why, she's just the same age we are, and I vow she looks twenty years older.

KATE [*positively*]: Pure carelessness, I call it. Men especially dislike a dowdy woman.

MOLLY: If that's true, you and I ought to have our belts hung full of scalps, considering the time we both spend in beauty parlors.

KATE: It's a fact that last week I spent every spare moment and nearly all my money having myself made presentable. Had to neglect all my committee work, too. That's the reason I'm so rushed to death now. [*Takes out mirror, looks critically at her face.*]

MOLLY: And it's exactly the reason why *I* refuse to do public work. I think woman's highest duty is to make herself beautiful.

KATE: Rather an ancient theory, my dear.

MOLLY: But not as yet refuted, you'll have to admit. The women whom we remember in history are those who were famous beauties—Cleopatra, Helen of Troy, etc.

KATE: True, in part, but many of these were also women who did something in the world. Nowadays it is not enough to be simply physically lovely. One must be active in outside affairs.

MOLLY: Well, have it your own way, but don't expect too much work of me. I'm seriously considering having my face lifted some time in the near future.

KATE: Don't work too hard, angel. Work brings wrinkles, you know.

MOLLY: Let's talk about Anne. Suppose we have a try at making her over. She's actually suffering for a few plain truths.

KATE: I'm game. If we can get her to go to this bridge party, that will make a beginning, but hush! [*Holds hands up.*] Here she comes. [*Anne enters, rather breathlessly.*] Anything wrong, dear?

ANNE: No, only the twins [*laughing*], when they come into the house they shake it. [*Kate and Molly arise.*]

KATE: Well, we must toddle along, and seriously, dear, we need your help on this party and you need it.

MOLLY: Anne, you shouldn't let yourself get so old-fashioned. You need some new clothes. Get more manicures—lose a little money at contract, and then see how proud your family will be of you.

ANNE [*thoughtfully*]: Perhaps.

KATE: You don't want your children to be ashamed of you, do you?

ANNE [*in dismay*]: Ashamed? My children ashamed of me?

MOLLY: Of course—young people like mothers to be modern now days.

ANNE: But—I've stayed home just because of them—to give them a home.

KATE [*briskly*]: Never too late to change. Get some glad rags and knock 'em cold. [*Takes out a notebook.*] Shall I put you down as a patroness? That'll be twenty-five dollars, and besides, you'll have to come to the committee meeting tomorrow at one o'clock at the club. We'll have a bit to eat and a game while we're planning it. Wear your newest dress.

ANNE: I'll send the check—but usually I'm home to lunch with the children.

MOLLY [*airily*]: Turn over a new leaf—then they'll appreciate you when you're there.

KATE: It's all settled, then—see you tomorrow. [*Going toward door.*] Oh, yes, if you'd like me to help you with some new clothes, Anne, just give me a ring soon. And, say, I know a woman who touches up hair just *wonderfully*. Oh, we'll have you looking like sweet sixteen, soon. Good-bye. [*Both exit right.*]

ANNE [*walking toward center, where she stands with her hand on table, looking almost dazed*]: Twice in an hour I've been called old-fashioned. To think that perhaps my children are ashamed of me, and what can I do about it? It begins to look as if it did not pay to stay home and be a good mother. [*Sinks into chair.*] I've been left behind while other women have been keeping up with the world. [*Enter Norah from left, dressed in funny outdoor clothes, carrying suitcase and hatbox. She marches to center of room, sets down baggage, then goes up to Anne, apologetically, saying:*] Sure, dearie, I'm that sorry to be lavin' ye, I could cry. [*Smiles brightly.*]

ANNE [*dully*]: Not so sorry as I am, Norah.

NORAH: Faith, Misses Gordon, it won't be long till I'll be after comin' back. [*Steps back, nodding and smiling.*]

ANNE: But it's the dinner tonight, Norah. What with company and all, I don't see how I'm going to manage it. [*She rises and spreads out her hands, almost appealingly.*]

NORAH: Darlin'! There's cold chicken in the ice-box and ye can always get ice cream and make a drap of tay.

ANNE [*in despair*]: A company dinner!

NORAH: Well, I'll be after goin'. I can't disappoint Pat. He's me own cousin on me mither's side, ye know. [*Picks up luggage and starts for door.*] Sure, and I hope I'll git there in time to help lay her out. Good-bye, Misses Gordon, I'll be back to ye when the wake's over. [*Exit. As she goes out, her voice is heard in the hall.*] Sure, Miss, walk right in, she's there.

[*The door opens and a lovely, dainty girl enters, dressed in a very smart, but exceedingly simple, suit. She stands hesitating for a moment, then sees Anne and advances slowly, her hand out, pleadingly. She asks:*]

DOROTHY: Is this Mrs. Gordon?

ANNE [*rising and going forward*]: Yes, I am Mrs. Gordon. What can I do for you, my dear?

DOROTHY [*shyly*]: I am Dorothy Richman.

ANNE: Dorothy Richman! Then you are Bob's Dorothy?

DOROTHY [*simply*]: Yes, I'm Bob's Dorothy.

ANNE: You darling! [*Kisses her.*] But where are Bob and your father, and how did you get here?

DOROTHY [*laughing*]: They had to stay over in Chicago, and I just couldn't wait to see you, Mrs. Gordon, and as long as I was so near, I came on alone. You don't mind, do you?

ANNE: Mind, I should say not! Take off your things. [*Helping her to remove her wraps.*] Put your bag down there and we'll take it to your room later. Now [*pulling her down on the davenport*], sit here, and we'll get acquainted.

DOROTHY: You see, Mrs. Gordon, I've always lived in hotels, and because Bob has told me so much about you and his family, I feel as if I knew every one of you.

ANNE: Haven't you ever had a home, Dorothy?

DOROTHY: Not since I can remember. Mother died when I was two, so I've always been with Dad in hotels. This [*looking around*] is a beautiful room, isn't it?

ANNE: Do you think so?

DOROTHY: Oh, yes, I feel so happy here. I'm so glad to have a family. I never had one before. [*Nervously twists her hands.*] That's the Doctor's easy chair, isn't it [*points*], where he sits and reads and smokes his pipe every night?

ANNE [*smiling*]: Yes——.

DOROTHY [*jumping up to examine a large framed picture on the table*]: And here's Helen in one of her stage costumes—I know. It must be thrilling to be an actress. How I hope she likes me!

ANNE: She's not an actress yet—far from it. She's just a student, but she's hoping to do some real work some day.

DOROTHY: I haven't one bit of talent. I can't sing, or play, or act. I'm just an ordinary girl, but—I do love Bob, dearly, Mrs. Gordon, and [*shyly*] I'm going to try to make him a good wife, and some day maybe I can make a wonderful home for my children as you do. [*As Dorothy speaks, Anne rises and comes to the center of stage.*]

ANNE: That's the most necessary thing, my dear.

[*Just then the door opens and in bursts Helen in great excitement. She rushes directly to her mother and so fails entirely to see Dorothy, who is by the table.*]

HELEN: Mother! Mother! I've got it! I've got it! The try-out was a success. They only kept me for a moment, then said my voice was O. K., and I could have the part in the radio drama, once a week all winter. I rushed right home in the car to tell you about it. I'm so excited. I can hardly believe it.

ANNE [*holding up her hand and attempting to stop Helen's chatter*]: But, Helen, dear——.

HELEN [*not noticing the interruption*]: Can't you just hear that announcer? [*She strikes a dramatic pose and quotes:*] "The next feature in the program this evening will be our regular weekly drama given by our staff artists. The leading part in this week's play will be taken by that talented young actress, Miss Helen Gordon. Miss Gordon is well known, as she has been heard in many of our programs this past season. Her fan mail exceeds any of our regular staff——." Oh, boy, I'm happy!

ANNE [*smiling*]: But, Helen, we have a guest. This is Dorothy.

DOROTHY: Hello, Helen.

[*The girls embrace.*]

HELEN: I'm so glad to see you, Dorothy.

DOROTHY: Aren't you clever!

HELEN: Me? No, it's mother who's clever, but she's so busy raising this family that she hasn't even time for beauty parlors.

DOROTHY [*seizing Anne's hand and looking up at her*]: Mrs. Gordon, do you know why Bob says he fell in love with me? It's silly, I know, but you see *he* thinks I look like you, and he says everyone knows that *you* are the *most beautiful woman in town*.

[*Anne looks surprised, then her face becomes radiantly happy, as the curtain falls.*]

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AUNT DEBORAH'S FIRST LUNCHEON. 2-act comedy for 7 characters, by Laura M. Adams. Aunt Deborah arrives at the home of her city cousin as they are entertaining fashionable friends at luncheon. Embarrassing situations. Ends happily. 45 minutes.....**35c**

THE BARBARIAN. 2-act comedy for 7 women. Story of a literary club meeting in a highly intellectual village....**25c**

THE BETTI-ATTITUDES. A delightful sketch for four sets of mothers and daughters, representing four generations. Each mother thinks the ideals of her generation are lost. 30 minutes.**25c**

FIGHTING IT OUT AT THE CHEER CLUB. Bell Elliott Palmer burlesque in 1 act, for 12 characters, and plays about 45 minutes. Describes a meeting of the "Cheer Club." Reports of members telling how they have cheered (?) fellow-townsmen, are full of fun and action.....**25c**

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JUST CARRYING ON. 1-act play by Bell Elliott Palmer for women's clubs and societies suitable for any patriotic occasion. Much good humor. About 45 minutes. 14 women.

MISS HOPE HALL'S SALE. 1-act Colonial play for 12 women, by Bell Elliott Palmer. Attractive number for women's clubs or young ladies' societies. Good black-face character. About 1 hour.....**25c**

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